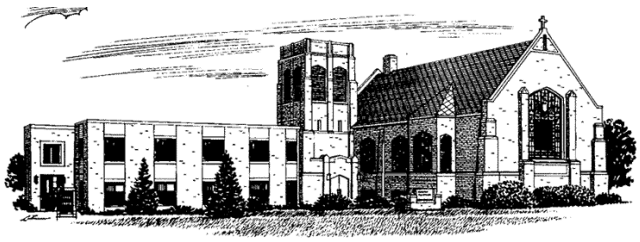


SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook: www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: *oleson@saronlutheran.org*

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Megan Savage Financial Secretary
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Sundays at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

Summers (thru Labor Day weekend):
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

All are welcome!

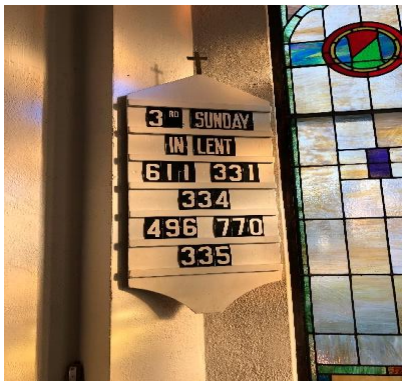
We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Rev. Whayne Hougland, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

May 2020



Each day I take a walk through Saron's building to pick up the mail and check on things. It doesn't take long, as I grab the Clorox wipe at the door and wipe down everything as I move along – doorknobs, banisters, phone receivers, etc. As I enter the worship space, I notice the hymn board marked in time from when we last gathered as the worshipping community. I could take the numbers down, sure. Instead, they serve as a stark reality of when we were last together in person.

Truth is, things will be different when we are together again. They should be. We might be more cautious about some things and we certainly know more about technology than we did a few weeks ago. What difference might that make? The other reality is that while we are church scattered these days, we are still the community of Christ, gathered in heart and spirit. We are still the body of Christ whose hands and feet and voices reach up in worship and out in service, even as that looks different these days. It happens while socially distanced for our own safety and the safety of others, while grateful for those who put their lives at risk, as essential workers. Several of you fall in that group. I am not sure when we will be meeting again in person. We are listening to guidelines in those matters. In the meantime, we remain the church who rejoices in the assurance of a risen Savior who is with us every step of the way. Alleluia!

Stay safe, healthy, and well, dear friends. If you need anything, please call and I will do my best to help out.

Pastor Joan

HOW CAN I HELP?
Check out more information on page 3 of this newsletter.

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

We remember in our thoughts and prayers:
Arla Huelsberg is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace; **Virginia Anserello** is at Pine Ridge, Stevensville.

Office Hours at Saron
Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:15 AM - 11 AM (approximately)
Financial Secretary: Megan Savage; Tues & Thurs 5:30 PM
financial@saronlutheran.org
Call the office for more information.
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to info@saronlutheran.org.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in May 2020

May 2 - John Hoodlebrink
3 - Brooklyn Huff
4 – Andrew Fortenbacher
6 – Charlene Baumgartner
9 - Dennis Lundgren
11 - Kelli (Hoodlebrink) Christman
12 - Alexander Maly
Andrew Stankiewicz
13 - Jenna Henderson
15 - Kathie Bradley
17 – Arla Huelsberg
19 - Monica Freemire
Jimmy Nicholas
22 - Connor Ashley
Laura Chaddock
23 - Adam Bradley
24 - Elliott Hooper
25 - Matthew Bradley
28 - Marlene Cox
30 - Benjamin Frey
31 - David Bradley

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members in 2020

May 2 - Phillip and Kathleen Preston
15 - David and Elizabeth Lundgren
16 - Ted and Ann Dosch
22 – James and Laura Hicks
23 - Edward and Mary Alice Brunner
Ryan and Serena Talbert
25 - Matthew and Amanda Bradley
30 – Robert and Mary Kynast

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round"

Please submit any corrections to the church office at 983-1273. Thanks.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Kris and Larry Weber upon the birth of their grandson, Mason John Buhnerkempe, on March 29. Mason is the son of Jeff and Emily, and little brother of Aaron.

WITH SYMPATHY

We offer our sympathy to members of Saron upon the recent deaths of their family members:
Amy Nelson upon the death of her father, Gordon, on April 5.
Pastor Joan and Jim upon the death of Pastor's brother, Mark, on April 11.
Lorraine Mikesell upon the death of her husband, Lee, on April 12.
Laura Chaddock upon the death of her father, Gary, on April 19.

God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 46:1a

PRAYER GROUP

Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer. Presently, this happens in individual homes; please email any requests to oleson@saronlutheran.org. Thank you.

FORTIFY & fly

When we gathered at the beginning of our Fortify & Fly journey in 2018 to identify Saron's strengths, we came up with lists of good stuff but phrases like "Strong Understanding of Technology" or "Ability to Quickly Adapt to Change" were not used a whole lot, if at all. We were stuck on words like "Traditional" and talking about our building and fantastic "Location". Sometimes it takes extreme pressure to find out what a foundation is made of and what it can take. Turns out Saron is stronger than we ever realized. We were faced with not being able to physically gather in our worship space, or any other space, and almost immediately we had a plan for using Zoom video conferencing. People that never envisioned logging into church over the computer or telephone are figuring it out. During one of the most traditional times of the year, we met for virtual coffee hours and celebrated Easter together but from our own homes. Our faith and our desire to share it with each other are our biggest strengths and we'll do whatever it takes to build on that no matter the circumstances around us. We should be so proud of ourselves and each other.

As of the end of March 2020, we had collected $247,826 towards our 3 year pledge total of $371,165. Thank you for figuring out how to continue giving in the absence of physical collection plates. We're all learning so many new tricks!

HOW CAN I HELP?

Some of you have asked how you can help during this time of Covid-19. Here are some thoughts.

Make contact with friends and acquaintances, especially those who may be feeling isolated. This is a great time to use your church directory as your guide.

You may also want to consider the following, some local and some global.

From our presiding bishop
https://community.elca.org/emailviewonwebpage.aspx?erid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d&trid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d

Lutheran Disaster Response
https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/Coronavirus

Lutheran World Relief
https://lwr.org/

Mask Challenge through the Women of the ELCA
https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/post/do-what-you-can-ms-ruby-advises

The Salvation Army
https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/bentonharbor/

The United Way (with opportunities for volunteering)
https://www.uwsm.org/

CROP HUNGER WALK
ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME

CROP Hunger Walks are interfaith events that build support while raising funds to end hunger in our own community AND also around the world.

Over the past 40 years, thousands of walkers raised more than $1,510,000 through the Blossomland CROP Hunger Walk. 25% of funds raised go back into the community. This year's agencies benefiting are: Benton Harbor Street Ministries, Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen, Bread of Heaven Food Pantry (Berrien Springs), Catholic Community Center, Fairplain Food Bank and the Salvation Army.

This year, because of the coronavirus pandemic and the need for social isolation, we are introducing a VIRTUAL CROP Hunger Walk. It takes place on Sunday, May 17. You can participate by donating at https://www.crophungerwalk.org/saintjosephmi/SaronChurch?tab=Team or you can register to be on Saron's team by following the registration instructions at https://www.crophungerwalk.org/saintjosephmi/SaronChurch?tab=Team

Thank you!

Worship

FACEBOOK

We love to share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday May 3 –
Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

Sunday May 10 –
Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
1 Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

Sunday May 17 –
Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:8-20
1 Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

Sunday May 24 –
Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:6-14
Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

Sunday May 31 –
Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104:24-34
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
John 20:19-23

Nursery News

We are always looking for more volunteers to keep this service available. We have a paid childcare provider but we need a second person in the room. You can dive right in to the playing or hangout in the background. We can and do work with a variety of schedules. Please let Marilyn Lucy, Krin Jurgensen, or Pastor Oleson know you are willing to help.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2020 flower calendar is posted. Cost: $25.00/vase. This is an opportunity for you to give flowers in honor or memory of someone. The church orders the flowers (unless you indicate otherwise) and you can take the flowers home after 2nd service.

Youth

Are you in grades 6-12? Please join us for youth group activities! For more info, contact Scott at *scottgaspari@outlook.com or (Cell) 847-373-8825.*

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR NEWS

Our Sunday gatherings are suspended until further notice.

Men's monthly Bible Devotions and Breakfast

On Saturday, May 4, Saron Men's Monthly Devotion and Breakfast Group will meet by ZOOM at 9:00 a.m. Contact Dennis Lundgren for more information. Newcomers always welcome.

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study

Our Saron Men's Tuesday Bible Study will continue at 6:00pm. We will meet from our homes using ZOOM to communicate. For a while, we will study the Bible Readings for the service on the following Sunday. For ZOOM information contact Bob Kynast at bobkynastgmail.com or cell (269) 921-2786.

THURSDAY MORNING STUDY

We continue our study on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom. Entitled "Grateful" this series is inspired by Diana Butler-Bass' book *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks*. The desire of the series is to inspire its participants to move outward into the world with the kind of generosity and gratitude that defies systems of scarcity and brings healing to the world. **Please let Pastor know** of your intention so you receive the sign-in information.

EPHESUS STUDY GROUP

For more information contact Mary Kynast at mfkynast@gmail.com or cell (269) 921-3816

1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We will be meeting again on Sunday, May 3rd, 6:30 p.m., on ZOOM. Our book will be "Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague", by Geraldine Brooks. The tale of a brave young woman during the plague in 17th century England doesn't sound like a recommendation for a good read, especially right now. However, "Brooks blends love and learning, loss and renewal into a spellbinding and unforgettable read." (Amazon)

We selected this older book, (published in 2001), one year ago. We thought it contained material for a good discussion because it features the best and worst of the human condition. Little did we know how relevant it would be today. For those of you who have been attending our discussions this season, you will receive the necessary ZOOM information through email. For anyone else who wishes to join in, please contact Kathy Cowall (269-428-0354) or kcowall@hotmail.com to be added to the list.

Our original selection for May, "The Wife", by Meg Wolitzer, will be moved to October. Since this is our last meeting for this season, we will be choosing books for 2020-2021. Check your email for books that have been suggested as good reads by fellow group members. Offer your opinion on May 3rd. Stay safe. Stay home. Stay healthy until we can be together in person once again.

Women of the ELCA.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will not meet on May 13, 2020 due to the ongoing Corona Virus. If circumstances change, members will be notified.

Hospitality

Sign Up for Refreshments

Please consider signing up for refreshments to be served after worship on Sundays. There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex bulletin board.

Outreach

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

A task force at Saron has been looking at issues of welcome and inclusivity and how to best live into our mission of "joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!"
As noted, the task force is working toward the possibility of Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation, that is a congregation intentional in its welcome of those in the LGBTQIA+ community.
Available at Saron's kiosk are several resources that can help individuals further explore various topics and aid in our conversations and welcoming. Serving on the task force are Kati and Nick Hooper, Laurel Gacek, Laura Hicks, Darlene Kiessel and Pastor. Contact any of these folks if you would like to know more.

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

On March 26th, with social distancing & using a lot of disinfectant, Deb Standen, & Dave & Kathie Bradley met at Saron to pack sack lunches for 120 people to be distributed at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. The Kitchen, which began on Water Street in Benton Harbor, celebrated its 40th anniversary in March. Since then it has served over a half million meals!! During this pandemic it is even more important to continue Saron's mission of *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*
Thank you to Jan Taylor, Mary Alice Brunner & Sally Schmuhl for baking cookies to be added to the lunches. Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, & prayers.

Large cans of fruit are always needed at the Soup Kitchen & can be dropped off anytime at the church. Any questions or to volunteer or provide cookies please contact Kathie Bradley at 269- 921-4665.

Support

A Special Message for Travelers and Those Who Prefer Electronic Giving

Saron offers the option to give electronically for your convenience. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or to enroll. Thanks.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, e-mail Matt Bradley to receive the account number for which the shares will be transferred to. Once the transaction has been completed, e-mail Matt Bradley the name of the stock, the number of shares, and the date of the transfer. This allows the transaction to be completed and ensures it is included on your giving statement. Thanks! Matt Bradley, treasurer

Interfaith Action
SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative

The purpose of this collaborative of faith communities is to provide a mechanism for ongoing interfaith discussion, education, and action. More information can be found at https://swmichinterfaith.org/

During this time of the pandemic, a variety of faith leaders have been offering a prayer of compassion and hope. Here is the link for Pastor Joan's offering from April 15.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aMQbGSWhFQ&feature=youtu.be&utm_source=SW+Michigan+Interfaith+Action&utm_campaign=35ed0960e9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_25_12_51_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4836b48bee-35ed0960e9-44451375

Council News

Saron's Council Members – 2020

Karen Johnson (269-983-2800 – President
Krin Jurgensen (269-369-4493 – Vice President
Joe Ulrey (313-718-2563) – Treasurer
Scott Kohs (269-967-4017) – Secretary
+++
Krin Jurgensen (269-369-4493 – Worship
Brad Frey (921-8618) – Facilities
Molly Becker – Youth
Don Hafer (269-470-2255) – Support
Matt Bradley (419-306-5780) - Support
Jim Manore (269-983-5915) – Hospitality
Deanna Deaton (429-9086) - Hospitality
Kristen Harper (277-9277) – Learning, Youth
Karen Johnson (269-983-2800) – Outreach
Scott Kohs(269-967-4017) - Outreach
Joan Oleson (983-1273) office;
(983-2475) home – Pastor

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May 2020
We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

We are temporarily holding our worship services via ZOOM at 11 a.m. each week. Please email the church office if you need more information. Typically, we change our service schedule on Memorial Day weekend. Please know that we will update you, to the best of our ability, with news as to worship schedules. We are watching guidelines closely and seek to do our part in keeping everyone safe and healthy. Be well!

May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
11:00 a.m. Worship Via Zoom Every Sunday of the Month					**1**	**2** 9:00 a.m. Men's Devotion/Breakfast Group will meet by ZOOM
3 11:00 a.m. Worship Via Zoom	**4**	**5** Cinco De Mayo 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study Via Zoom	**6** No Golden Hammers	**7** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**8**	**9**
10 Mother's Day 11:00 a.m. Worship Via Zoom	**11** 6:00 p.m. Support Comm. Via Zoom Newsletter articles due	**12** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study Via Zoom	**13** No Golden Hammers NO Deborah Circle meeting	**14** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**15**	**16** Armed Forces Day
17 11:00 a.m. Worship Via Zoom	**18** 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting Via Zoom	**19** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study Via Zoom	**20** No Golden Hammers	**21** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**22**	**23**
24 Worship Via Zoom	**25** Memorial Day	**26** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study Via Zoom	**27** No Golden Hammers	**28**	**29**	**30**
31 Worship Via Zoom	**Note: This calendar is accurate as of 4/21/2020. We will do our best to notify folks of any changes, since its completion.**					